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THE SOCIOLOGISTS' POINT OF VIEW.

THE fact which has begotten sociology is a dawning social consciousness. As in no previous age of the world's history men are with one voice inquiring "What are the facts and the forces that make or mar social life?" Sociology is not, like many of the systems of thought that have attracted men before, the amusement of recluse philosophers. Sociology is a frank attempt to assist in supplying a real popular demand. It springs from the people's thought, not alone from the lucubrations of closet speculators.¹ At the same time sociology attempts to inform and control the very popular thought by which it has been inspired. The concrete popular demand is for specifics. Sociology is devoted to showing that specifics, if they could be invented, would not long satisfy the demand, and it is further bent on showing that something may presently be had better than specifics.

Practical men of all sorts and conditions are beginning to inquire whether social conditions may not, to a thus far unsuspected degree, be like our food, our clothes, and our shelter—something to be thought out, and planned, and systematically constructed. More men than ever before are at least dimly aware that it is needful to give deliberate thought to social

Vide JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY, July 1895, "The Era of Sociology."

arrangements, instead of allowing society to happen into shape. This more general perception is spurring the sociologists to perfect their methods. Popular unrest and scientific curiosity are together asking the question "What are the inside facts about human society?" The first division of the work which the sociologists are undertaking is the task of making clear to the different kinds of people who are trying to solve social problems what division and organization of labor is necessary in order to progress as fast as possible in answering this general question, with all the minor questions which it involves and implies.

This paper is addressed, not to specialists, but to the many thoughtful students of social questions who are anxious to know whether there is some best way of thinking about social relations. Nor is it my purpose to glorify sociology and sociologists. Only a very small fraction of the people who are doing the work which is necessary before searching questions about society can be answered are now or are likely to be called sociologists. The sociologists are one class among many workers in a common field. The whole field, not a narrow portion of it claimed by particular specialists, interests members of society in general. Yet in some respects the sociologists have more in common with the non-professional many than have any other group of technical students of society. The point of view of the sociologists is that of the social person of every sort, rather than that of the specialist. For this reason it is worth while to explain with the least possible technicality, not what the sociologists claim as their peculiar province or mission, but rather the point of view which the sociologists think everybody should occupy who ventures to hold or to seek opinions about any kind of social relations.

The starting point of the sociologists, then, is frank belief that the best of us are as yet comparatively ignorant about the inside facts of society, and that thoroughgoing study of society is necessary. The majority of the people in the world have yet to be convinced that study of society is important. I might

discuss those scholars who more or less directly contend that all necessary study of society is sufficiently provided for. I am just now more concerned with those unscholarly persons who either tacitly or expressly set themselves against the necessity of any study of society at all. "Why need we study society?"

The first answer to this inept question would seem to be on the face of the fact that nature is one factor and society another with which every human being has to deal. If it is profitable to study nature, it surely is to study society. Society is simply all the people together in any part of the world which may be thought of by itself. "Society" is our town. It is the United States. It is the group of civilized nations with which Americans have intercourse. It is again the whole human family. If we do not use the word in the remote sense that places "society" beyond the range of ordinary interest, it seems that the word means only something so very commonplace that study of it is rather beneath what we suppose to be our dignity. We have "society," like the poor, always with us. It is perfectly familiar. Why study it?

People have asked the same question about all familiar things when it was first proposed to study them, and build up scientific knowledge about them. People had breathed air, for example, thousands of years before it occurred to anybody to study air. When scholars began to talk about studying air ordinary people laughed at them. "The idea of studying air! Why not study something worth while? Everybody knows all about air." It proved, however, that nobody really knew much of anything precisely about air. People did not so much as know that air is heavy, that it is elastic, that it is a mixture of gases, etc. People said the same thing when scholars talked of studying water, either physically or chemically. They said the same thing about the beginnings of the study of plant and animal life—biology. President G. Stanley Hall is fond of recalling the farmer to whom some students of biology had applied for help to find frogs for study. "What is there to study about frogs? I know all about frogs myself. I've got a whole pond full of

them down there." So our very familiarity with society has kept us from stopping to think about society in a way to make us understand society.

Possibly this needs to be illustrated. We of course get sophisticated in society so that we know how to carry ourselves in a certain customary fashion. We know where to get ordinary wants supplied. We go to butcher, and baker, and candlestick-maker, and tailor, and seamstress, and doctor, and lawyer, and printer, and actor for their different sorts of service; and we seldom call upon one of these for work that belongs to another. If we do blunder and confuse these different people we make ourselves ridiculous. I was in a confectioner's on State street the other day when a young women came in with a bottle and asked the soda-fountain attendant for some cough medicine. The saleswomen all giggled and the customers arched their eyebrows with most superior airs. The young woman did not show ordinary practical acquaintance with society. But suppose one of those clerks or customers had been asked to explain how it comes about that there is a confectioner on one corner and a druggist on the opposite corner; how it is possible for either to pursue his occupation year after year without closing his shop periodically and wandering far afield to gather the stuffs from which his goods are made; how each can foresee what sort and amount of his wares will be called for, and how he can have them in stock waiting for buyers. In all probability not one of those people who laughed at the unsophisticated girl could take many steps in precise explanation without betraying essentially equal ignorance. In our thought about society most of us are much like the English country gentleman who divided the animal kingdom into "game," "vermin," and "stock." Such a classification serves the country gentleman's purpose well enough, but how about the naturalist? Plover and wild boars are alike "game," but in anatomical structure they hardly belong together. Geese and oxen are alike "stock," but the uses to man which justify this common designation do not correspond with the sort of resemblances that mark members of the same zoölogical species.

Dividing animals according to whether our habit is to shoot, or poison, or work them is not going very far toward understanding them.

Some of our customary divisions of men are quite as unintelligent. When we talk of the "professional classes" and the "politicians," and the "business men," and the "working men," and the "capitalists," our distinctions are possibly of the "game, vermin, and stock" variety. We are probably dealing in superficialities. We are postponing good knowledge of the part played and the merit earned by different sorts of people.

From the sociologists' point of view, then, we need to study society because it is the surrounding, the "environment," as the biologists say, in which all of us live and move and have our being. It is stupid and costly to let our thoughts about society be vague or wrong or partial. To live well we need to understand the circumstances that surround our attempts to live. The sociologists propose systematic study of society in order to develop the power and the habit of seeing society, and seeing into society, and seeing through and around society, for the sake of power to see beyond society as it exists today and into social conditions that may be desirable and possible tomorrow.

Most people never see what they see. A parlor game sometimes called "Observation" makes amusement out of this fact. A score or more of small objects are scattered upon a tray, and the players are instructed to file by the table and notice the objects. Then, upon pain of forfeit for each omission, the players are called upon to write a list of the articles on the tray. The results always illustrate the fact that we seldom see all that we see. This is notoriously true of social relations. Only a few exceptional people have seen, for example, that a part of our own life is lived by people miles away, whose names we have never heard. Because certain men in Montana or the Argentine or Australia have raised a particular breed of sheep, we are able to wear some parts of the clothing at this moment on our bodies. Those distant people have been dressing us for years, while we have given scarce a thought to their existence. Who puts fork

and spoon in our mouth at today's dinner? Not our hand alone. Some men have been raising wheat in Dakota, and potatoes in Michigan; others have been boiling salt in New York, others picking coffee in Java, and drying tea in Japan, and gathering spices in the isles of the sea; and porters have carried on their backs, and loaded on drays, and sails have strained, and boilers have steamed, and officials have inspected, and merchants have sworn, and traders have broken bulk, and factory hands have labored—all in the course of setting our table. If the family next door to some of us in the city should move away or die, nothing worth noticing might be subtracted from our life. If those thousands of people in distant parts of our own land or beyond seas should stop living and working, great sections of our own life would cease. This is merely a specification under the well-known and ill-known formula, "None of us liveth to himself." The monster known to theory as "the individual" does not exist except in theorists' speculations. The man who thinks himself an independent individual has put an optical illusion in place of himself. We human beings are what we are because we are parts of society. What society is decides what we are and what we may be.

Again, very few people have ever seen that a part of their life was lived a decade, a century, a millennium ago. Our life is not all today and tomorrow. Its yesterdays are just as really parts of it as any of its present moments. Society is like Tennyson's brook, as of course the poet meant for his lines to say. Society, too, goes on forever. Persons are bubbles on the surface of the brook, but each bubble is a part of the brook. Each bubble is what it is because of the bed which the brook has worn for ages; because of the course of the brook from the source to the spot where the bubble forms; because of the soil on the banks, the life in the stream, the sunshine or cloud in the sky. In plain prose, our lives, ourselves, are atoms of the life of humanity that has been working to form us through all the ages.

Suppose one of us at five years of age were thrown on Robinson Crusoe's island. Suppose the waif were naked, without

tools, without provisions. He would not even then be utterly uncultured or absolutely unskilled. He would carry rudimentary civilized tastes and the beginnings of social tradition. Cut off from the body of that tradition, however, he would not come into his inheritance as an heir of the ages. He would have to begin where primitive men began, and live the fragmentary life that all men had to lead before life upon life had accumulated facilities and capacities for living. He would have to learn all the things about the resources of nature, their uses, the ways of extracting and transforming and applying them that have been discovered in the course of human experience. He would have to acquire all the arts and crafts and mysteries by which the world's workers have wrought over raw material for human use. Thrown back upon the necessity of doing all his living for himself, he would need thousands of years to acquire the tastes, develop the wants, and learn the skill to provide for himself the food, clothes, tools and trinkets that the ordinary civilized man requires. In our actual brief term of life we have much life by being sharers of all past life.

There are still further reasons for the study of society. Sooner or later thoughtful people discover that society is a collection of problems; people have to tackle these problems. Improvement of life means solution of these problems. In order to render any intelligent assistance in solving these problems we must study society sufficiently to make the problems real to our own mind.

These social problems, as proposed by complainers, and agitators, and "reformers," and seers of every sort, prove upon inspection to be larger or smaller parts of certain greater problems like these: What are we human beings actually living for? What are we trying to bring about, on the whole, as the outcome of living? Are we making the best use of our resources to reach these ends that we have in view? What is the best that we might live for, if we took a little wiser look into the situation, and calculated the possibilities of life a little more broadly and deeply? We cannot dissolve this social partnership if we would.

How may we make it closer, and better adapted to secure these better results? All the questions about wealth, labor, monopolies, trusts, forms of government, administrative policies, class relationships; all questions of justice and morality between man and man, are parts and details and variations of the great problem of knowing society as the real fact, the largest, most meaningful reality that we touch in actual life.

One of the reasons why we have to put up with social disturbance in the place of social progress today, why we have such strifes of tongues and opinions instead of instruction fit to improve life, is another version of the answer to our question, viz., men are so anxious to solve social problems that they have no time to study society. The consequence is that their solutions do not solve. Worse than this, their agitations create more problems. The shortest way to reach ability to solve social problems is not to try to solve them at all for a long time, but to learn how to state them. To most of those who share the feverishness of our day to extemporize social solutions this programme seems to demand waste of too much valuable time. On the contrary, the men who are intelligently following this programme, by studying partially understood factors in society instead of trying to cipher out social problems whose terms cannot yet be definitely expressed, are making haste slowly, to be sure, but they are making haste.

These propositions are so commonplace that serious difference about them might seem impossible among intelligent people. The fact is, however, that the people who are concerned about social questions are separated into the scientific and the unscientific class by divergence at this very outset. The men of scientific temper and the men of business methods maintain that realistic study of social facts simply as facts, without any interposition of our opinions and feelings, is the only credible guarantee of the respectability of subsequent conclusions. Facts alone can be a reliable source of opinions. Men of the opposite type not only skip the work of getting evidence and sifting it; they even deny that such unemotional examination of facts is possible, and

they ridicule and denounce the men who attempt it. They have no tolerance for the men who want to analyze social facts without prejudice, just as the anatomist would examine impartially the tissues and secretions and excretions of the human body. They have no conception of any service that may be rendered to truth by calmly inspecting family, shop, school, church, state, club, trade, saloon, brothel, bank and mill just as the microscopist examines alike, without fear or favor, healthy and diseased animal tissue. They think they have said something wise when they point out that a student of society has merely made a diagnosis of a social condition, but has proposed no specific for correcting the condition. They cannot understand the scientific separation of processes which compels the geologist, for example, first to distinguish gravel from loam and from clay, then to inquire how each was deposited, and last of all to indulge the expression of individual or of collective interest in feelings of approval or disapproval toward either. It is no more true of the geologist than of the sociologist that his first duty is to understand his facts. It is neither his duty nor his right to approve or disapprove them until he understand them.

With all this in view from his outlook, the sociologist naturally differs in judgment from those people who claim superior merit as humanitarians and moralists for refusing to acquire the necessary knowledge about society, who prefer instead to scourge the air with exhortations to reform institutions they do not understand. Specific doctrines and policies about "living issues" are by no means the only nor the surest reliance for improving the world. The sociologist would be the last man to approve the policy of folding the hands and waiting until we are omniscient before trying to help ourselves. As public-spirited citizens sociologists would coöperate with all other good citizens in doing the best things in sight to make life more satisfactory. The sociologist would have men face the social duties of every day just as the merchant faces the questions which he has to decide. He acts on the basis of the best evidence he can get. He does not wait till he can solve all the problems of the universe; or even all

the immediately pressing questions of national finance. As scholars, on the other hand, students of society, whatever their special name, are bound to see and to show that these best things are of limited avail, and that in the long run the kind of intelligence which can bring about wise adjustments to new conditions is more serviceable and reliable than mere zeal for expedients, for these may serve at best only a temporary purpose. Every person who in the slightest degree shares the privilege and the responsibility of forming public opinion ought to feel bound to have beliefs on all the subjects upon which public opinion must pass. He ought to use every available means to provide himself with respectable beliefs, and he ought to exert himself to make them influential. At the same time, if the good citizen happens to be a scholar, he will satisfy the sociologists' ideas of scholarly balance only when he holds these beliefs at a true proportional valuation in the scale of knowledge. The student of society ought to have enough decision of character to commit himself both in thought and action on such subjects as the tariff, the currency, internal taxation, public policy towards monopolies, and the demands of the numberless "interests" that seek legislative help. The wise student of society will at the same time, even in his most sanguine moods, steady himself with the reflection that the best of his beliefs and programmes about current "issues" are of subordinate importance after all. It makes relatively little difference what we think about specific cases. They may be exceptional and temporary. Our views about them may become obsolete at any moment through change of circumstances. It makes a great deal of difference whether we are intelligent about abiding relationships. Very much depends upon our general outlook upon society; upon our spirit about life, upon insight into permanent elements of human character and conditions. Our personal equation in these respects will make us forces for evil or good, for progress or regress, in spite of changed circumstances. Ralph Waldo Emerson was far from ideal success in combining these two elements of social fitness. He was so much a citizen of the timeless world that he seemed

to thousands of his neighbors worse than useless as a New Englander as the "irrepressible conflict" approached. He was so broadly human that he was a tardy partisan. The things that he thought and said seemed to the majority mystical and impertinent. Men whose narrowness was their virtue denounced his breadth as vice. Yet some of these same men lived to acknowledge that, at the supreme moment, Emerson was in the conflict with ten thousand disciples whom he had formed into large true men.

The sociologist who has exerted more influence than any other in France during the last thirty years got his influence by predicting just what befell France in the war with Prussia. He studied social conditions in France and pointed out the direction in which they afterward proved to be tending.¹ Ability to make similar forecasts is the end at which the sociologists aim. They believe it possible so to organize and improve methods of inquiry about society that great gain may be made in our ability not only to foresee but to foreordain. To further fix the sociologists' point of view, I pass then to some of their more general ideas about methods of studying society.

To illustrate the sociologists' view of the ways in which we must learn to study society, in order to get what we can discover into truthful shape, let us imagine that we are for the first time confronting the question, What are the inside facts of society?

Let us suppose that this question had never been asked before. Suppose that we had meanwhile acquired all the ideas of logic, and of science, and of the laws of scientific evidence which we now possess. How would we go to work to discover the inside facts of society?

If we had no well-established sciences of human life, or sciences dealing with men in society, to embarrass us in marking out a method appropriate to our task, men of modern scientific temper, trained under the rules which modern science has tested by experience, would doubtless proceed somewhat in this way: They would begin by taking a fair, full, clear view of the whole

¹ *Vide* JOUR. OF SOC., March 1897, "The Le Play Method of Social Observation."

range of facts with which their question deals. They would say to themselves: The thing that we want to understand is this immemorial complex of coöperating men in which we find ourselves forming a part during our passing day. The fact that greets our eyes is that men fill the world; they crowd upon each other; they express in outward action their inward thought. This expression of thought brings things to pass. It makes and remakes the mold of institutions within which individual careers are pursued. It modifies people. It transforms all the human elements in the world. This human action and reaction is, on the one hand, never the same in two successive years. On the other hand, it is all one endless, incessant, indivisible process from beginning to end. The men on the stage of action never change all together and at once. They relieve each other in relays or shifts. There is total substitution of actors after a while, but by such means that unbroken continuity of action is preserved. It is all one long, mixed, mysterious commingling process. To our first view it is simply continuance. We cannot find its beginning; we cannot find its end. Men have lived together and rubbed against each other, and so have produced all our ways of life, such as they are.

Can we grasp all this in a single view that will help us hold it before the mind's eye for inspection? Yes, we can sum it up in one word—*association* or *society*—always meaning by it *human* association or society. That word gives us a unified object of thought. It does not explain anything that we want to know, but it presents the thing to be explained as a single concept. The implications of this concept are to be discovered, and we have only put the stupendously complex question in more convenient shape when we reduce it to the easy form. What are the facts about association or society? The term society stands for all the people whose presence within the world-making process, at any time, earlier or later, has in any degree affected the process. Society, then, means the total of effective human beings working in their various ways within the bounds of time and space which our human career has occupied. It is reason-

able to assume that this time and space-filling reality—society—has exhibited some regularities and irregularities capable of formulation in general propositions. It is probable that human associations, closely scrutinized, will demonstrate qualities of the human factors concerned. It is likely that there are general principles of action and effect illustrated in all this mass and variety of association. It is to be assumed that if our minds could take in all that has occurred among men we should have a systematized body of knowledge about the operative forces wherever men are in association. It is probable that this body of knowledge would serve to make men more intelligent in the future than they have been in the past about social conduct. Let us, therefore, set ourselves to know this reality, society. Surely by such knowledge alone may we wisely order our lives.

We are supposing in all this, *first*, that our hypothetical students of society have all the intellectual tools now at our disposal; *second*, that they are entirely unhampered by conventional scientific divisions of territory with their traditions. Under that supposition the first thing which such men would plan would be methodical collection of facts bearing upon social reality. From time to time they would adopt theories about the facts, and use them as tools of search. For simplicity we may neglect this element in the process. Whether as products of pure speculation about the facts, or as generalizations of things really observed, students would be obliged to adopt provisional groupings of facts as means of covering the ground most carefully. We need not attempt to prove that there is but one possible system of groupings adequate to organize the facts. It is by no means sure what will finally seem to be the best classification of social facts, or whether any single classification will prove the best. Our present outlook makes desirable, in the first place, a classification of facts, as, *first*, those that pertain primarily to the individual in all his characteristics, physical and psychical; *second*, those that pertain primarily to associated individuals, in all associated characteristics, whether physical or psychical.

Proceeding along this line we should discover before long that the above distinction is not matched by a corresponding separation in fact between the human individual and the associated individual. We should find that all persons are associated persons. This discovery brings with it two results: first, to know the individual we shall have to follow him out of himself into his correlations with others; second, to know the correlations which are constituted by associations of men we must know their elements, as these are located in the make-up of the individuals who produce the associations. That is, while we may distinguish the phases of knowledge needed by the standpoint—whether individual or collective—from which we begin a particular research, the knowledges always run into each other, and find themselves, at last, either as like parts of larger wholes, or as respectively less and more inclusive portions of the same whole. For instance, if we are studying the life of a town, we may deal in turn with its physiography, natural and artificial; its industries; its government; its educational, charitable, artistic, social, or devotional institutions. Each of these portions of the whole called “the town” is meaningless or deceptive if held separate from the other parts. Then there may be more minute analysis of each of these segments or systems within the town, as, for example, the school system, the things so discovered being subordinate parts in one of the many large divisions of the group.

In pursuing this way of approach to the inside facts of society we should presently find ourselves asking in turn all the questions which the biologist asks about life in general, and which the physiologist and the physical anthropologist ask about human life in particular. We should also find ourselves asking all the questions which the psychologist asks about the mental facts of individual action. In other words, we should encounter the need of developing the same sciences of individual life which have already started into existence without any help from sociology. Keeping up our artificial assumption of entirely unconventional study, we should very likely act like an

army overrunning a hostile country. As fast as we reached these strategic positions we should detail garrisons to hold the territories thus occupied, *i. e.*, we should detach from the main body of men in pursuit of the inside facts of society special bodies to pursue special phases of facts as parts of the whole body of knowledge which we are seeking.

Suppose still that the army of students, marching and skirmishing under a clear-headed leader, should keep asking, What are the inside facts of society? They would presently hit on the discovery that there are a great many facts which manifest themselves only in individuals, but they are parts of a physical or a psychical process which can be understood only by knowing about reactions with other individuals. Here we should be on the borderland in which individual facts merge into social facts. In other words, we should be asking the questions which prompt men to develop the sciences of ethnology and folk psychology, or social psychology, and history. Again we should discover that there are other facts or realities which do not in like fashion come to light merely in individuals. They have their incorporation in symbols or institutions by which men are controlled. Such realities are language, literature, religions, philosophies, sciences, arts, legal, economic, and governmental systems. In view of these latter realities we should be prompted to ask the questions which have been making the sciences of comparative philology, comparative literature, comparative religion, comparative philosophy (or history of philosophy) and which are likely to make sciences or systems of comparative science, art, jurisprudence, economics, and administration.

A moment's inspection will discover that in all this we should be asking in the first instance historical questions merely, *i. e.*, What have been the facts in these different subdivisions of human reality? We should not long be content with questions of this sort. In so far as the realities are still vital we should want to make examinations of them also at right angles, so to speak, with the historical way of looking at them. We should want cross sections of these various groups of facts—philosophies of

them. Thus we should ask the same manner of questions that have produced, besides logic and rhetoric and psychology, political and juridical and economic and ethical science.

If we review this hypothetical course of study we see that we have thus started without conventional restrictions, but led on by discoveries in the facts themselves we have gradually separated the things worth knowing about the facts into divisions closely corresponding with the departments of knowledge that have come into existence experimentally.

Not referring at present to any further divisions of knowledge, but supposing for the sake of argument that the above named cover the whole territory, would the examination thus outlined finish up the list of questions which our minds would propose? As a matter of fact very few persons have ever felt the need of going beyond some one or two of these divisions of inquiry. In pursuing knowledge within one of these territories most men find occupation difficult enough, and so, either from lack of curiosity or from inability to satisfy curiosity within their special field, they never feel impelled to pursue inquiries further. Occasionally a man has placed himself outside the group of facts which he knew best, and has tried to put them into intelligible relation with other facts which he knew. Cases in point are the so-called philosophies of history. From various theological, philosophical, or scientific grounds their authors have tried to find a nexus between seemingly chaotic events.

Let us suppose ourselves to have reached the point in social inquiry where we are eager to combine the results of historical research about many different kinds of facts into a clear revelation about general social influences. We have not thereby created a demand for knowledge of distinctively new subject-matter. We have discovered our need of further organization of what is known about the old subject-matter. This demand will surely call for additions to the things known, and also for new processes in organizing this increasing knowledge. In these new processes new questions will be proposed, and they will reach out after entirely new answers.

For instance, suppose we have been asking some historical questions about a given period, say the beginning of the French Revolution. Let us suppose that we have asked and answered the question, What caused the French Revolution? Now the question arises, What causes revolutions? Here is a new problem, and the previous inquiry does little to solve it. In the first place we find ourselves bound to search for a clew to the character of revolutions. What is a revolution? In one case it is a change from pastoral industry and nomadic habits to agriculture and fixed settlements. In another case it is a change from patriarchal to kingly government. In another the displacement of one religion by another. Again it is the overthrow of a dynasty, or of a theology, or of an economic theory, or once more it is the enlargement of the sphere of social operations, as by the discoveries of the fifteenth century, or it is the displacement of mechanical agencies by others, as in the industrial revolution of the present century. What is a revolution? It is a change within society, profoundly agitating and reordering the members of society. It is as manifold as the possible ways in which society may be changed. What causes revolutions? Our few and meager studies in history furnish us here and there a single case in point, but no sufficient basis of induction. In one case it is intolerable oppression. In another it is successful war. In another, famine. In another, fanaticism. In another, dogmatism. In another, decay of faith. In others, greed, love of adventure, race jealousy, dynastic pride, political expediency, commercial ambition, or an outbreak of sheer social madness. The historian of a certain type fulfills his mission if in one case he fully makes out the actual cause or causes of a single revolution; say the oligarchic revolution of the Thirty in Athens, the Gracchian revolution in Rome, the successive revolutions under the Cæsarian empire, the deposition of the Merovingians, the ecclesiastical revolution under Hildebrand, the religious revolutions of the sixteenth century, the revolution of the continental state system at the close of the eighteenth century, the social revolutions in

England, Russia, and America, enfranchising artisans, serfs, and slaves.

Surveying such a group of realities we come to see that among associated men there are innumerable changes similar in form, dissimilar in substance, and as yet unaccounted for in cause and operation. We simply suspect at the outset that there are certain kinds and numbers of influences operating in all associations to bring about these like, yet unlike, results. It may seem rash and utopian to propose an effort to make these forces intelligible, yet this is precisely what the sociologists demand. They claim that knowledge about society is merely stray glimpses shot into scattering incidents of human life, it is abortive pedantry, it is dallying with stray fragments of information, unless it is so organized that the largest truth present in the incidents is evident. This enlightening organization of knowledge is not history, at least in the primary sense, but it is dependent on history. The process which the sociologist calls for at this point is to the historian's task somewhat as the public prosecutor's is to that of the various detectives who work up evidence on a case. One man traces out a series of facts about the personal habits of the accused; another follows out his business transactions; another his private speculations; another his political schemes; another certain exceptional and special acts which have a possible connection with the case. All this detective work may have been guided by a theory about the case, but at last, at any rate, the attorney takes these different sorts of evidence and weaves them into a coherent, self-consistent setting for the particular act in question. This combining work is a process quite distinct from that of collecting and sifting the evidence.

So with the explanation of social phenomena. They are the point of intersection of many factors which we need to know, first, in general, as typical and constant social forces. Then they must be known in particular, as they emerge in the special case under consideration. The process of deriving these insights into social forces in general is so independent and peculiar that its

distinctness from the process of getting less generalized results should be beyond question.

With the case of revolutions as a sample it would not take long to make a catalogue of like questions which present a whole schedule of new scientific problems. These are not ingenious riddles, of no value except for amusement. They are inquiries after constant and general modes of social influence. We shall not understand inside social facts until we have asked all possible questions, and have made out the truth about these social forces. For instance, we are concerned to generalize knowledge on such fundamental questions as these : What are the laws of the interplay of influences that produce different types of society, such as the militant, the industrial, the individualistic, the collectivistic ? What influences make stationary and what fluctuating social conditions ? What conditions tend to perpetuate dominant industrialism, what to foster idealism ? What social conditions tend to make the type of persons comprising the society more complete and symmetrical ? What tends to the contrary result ? According to what principles do the different classes of human desires come to have varying proportions of influence in society ? What are the forms in which human associations arrange themselves, and what are the laws of reaction between these mere forms and the psychical forces which produce them ? Are there discoverable principles that express the laws of the influence of individuals upon institutions, and, conversely, of institutions upon individuals ?

These are not questions which seem to be connected with living human interests. Answers to them seem, moreover, beyond the reach of the human mind. Certain people find it hard to believe that if answers could be found they would have any bearing upon human pursuits. To the sociologist, however, these questions have an importance like that which the physicist finds in primary problems of mechanical action. Men first laboriously invented the lever, the wedge, the wheel and axle, the pulley, the screw, and the inclined plane. For centuries they used them without thinking much beyond or about them.

Then a few people began to be more comprehensive in their thinking. They tried to detect and define the elements of force that operated in these primitive machines. They tried to make general formulas of their actions, and gradually there evolved from simple practical mechanics the modern type of physicists, who in turn make possible the development of more skilled and resourceful mechanics. Precisely parallel is the programme of the sociologists. Men have been going through the motions of association for untold centuries, but have thought comparatively little about those motions, the forces that sustain them, or the results that they produce. The type of thinkers has now appeared that will try to define and generalize these social forces, their forms of actions, and their products. Their purpose is to make society so intelligent about itself that it can presently direct its acts toward more rational aims, and can organize individual effort for more effective coöperation.

It has no doubt appeared in the foregoing that two general questions about the facts of society are inextricably involved with each other, viz.: first, how did social arrangements come to be as they are? Second, how does it come about that social arrangements stay as they are? The latter question seems to assume what is not true, but there is a phase of reality corresponding with the assumption. The former question sums up all the inquiries that belong to history in the broadest sense, as Herbert Spencer has outlined the business of history. Dr. Lester F. Ward has supplied a better phrase, when he groups all these facts and interpretations under the head "social genesis." The latter question sets in motion all the investigations which the sociologist would group under the general title of "social statics." Professor Ward has also clearly shown that the general truths formulated by genetic and statical interpretation of social facts may be grouped together under the term "social mechanics." Each of these groups of inquiries casts light on the other, and it is probable that progress toward final results will be by means of parallel advances toward settlement of the two sorts of questions. Thus each manifestation of a social

force, as in "imitation," "social supremacy," "consciousness of kind," raises first the question, What is the force behind the manifestation? and then the question, What rôle has this force played in the past, and what rôle does it play in the present? All study of what has been and of what now is in society falls within one or the other of these divisions of inquiry, or it is a combination of them.

What inferences should be drawn from this survey of social study, as the field would present itself to a naïve mind equipped with right methodological principles, and unspoiled by conventions and prejudice? In the first place, the inference that pretentious generalizations about laws of social progress or social order must be regarded with grave suspicion, until the facts of human experience have been much more thoroughly canvassed than they are likely to be for generations to come. In the second place, that in preparation either for practical judgments upon immediate social conditions, or for larger philosophical generalizations of more typical conditions, it is worth while to acquire breadth and poise of judgment by the largest possible familiarity with what is known about social cause and effect in the past, and about reciprocal social influences in the present. In the third place, there is no likelihood that anybody will reach any central fact from which by deduction we can answer in detail, from general to special, the questions involved in the inquiry, What are the inside facts of society? There is accordingly no short cut or royal road to a comprehensive sociology. The sociological problem is in the first stage a collection of minor problems, either historical or contemporary. The people who will make permanent contributions to the development of social philosophy are those who will have patience to select distinct problems, and work upon them until the last available evidence is collected, and the results are in shape to be organized into the whole body of social explanation. There is no special kind of fact which deserves to be called sociological *par excellence* in distinction from historical, or ethnological, or economic, or political, or demographic facts. There are uses of the facts, correlations of

them, which take them out of the range of the special sciences. There are other facts which, when collected, may become the material of coördinate sciences not yet developed. There are also kinds of facts which are needed to fill out a complete schedule of social knowledge, but might not become the recognized preserve of any special science. Such, *e. g.*, are facts which are likely to constitute sanitary science; facts foreshadowing sciences or departments of knowledge about dependents, defectives, and delinquents; facts about the conditions of labor; facts about the effect of physical and moral conditions of labor upon all the other elements of life; facts about the reactions between all the other institutions of society, from the family to the government; and last, but not least, facts about the judgments and standards of judgment that prevail in the living generation. In these last are the springs of social action.

It may be said that every kind of fact thus referred to falls within the province of some science other than sociology. Even if this were true, the like might be said of every fact with which the science of medicine has to deal; yet the professor of the theory and practice of medicine has distinctly different problems from those of anatomist, physiologist, morphologist, chemist, etc. The like is also true of geology, whose facts are the proper material of physics, chemistry, palæontology, mineralogy, petrography, etc. The room for sociology is found in the need of making larger combinations of social facts than are proper in sciences which necessarily proceed by abstraction.

It is not true, therefore, that problems of sociology fall within the province of other sciences. Sociology attempts to do what the more special sciences of society have very properly refused to do, *viz.*, it confronts real conditions, while the other sciences deal with abstractions. But while abstraction is a necessary step to knowledge, it is not the final step. So soon as economist, political scientist, moralist, statistician, demographer, or sanitarian undertakes to explain, or in any way to deal with a whole social condition as it is encountered in reality—for instance, the relation of a school, a saloon, a trust, a

political boss to the whole plexus of social relations—he steps out of his special province to tread a different soil, talk a different language, use different tools, and work at different tasks from those of his specialty, and then his abstraction will lead to perversion unless it is harmonized with other abstractions. This harmonizing, or synthesizing, or integrating process has not yet been sufficiently provided for in social science. In other words, the sociologist maintains that specialism is partialism unless it is organized into realism. The sociologist demands, therefore, that the light of all special social knowledge shall be thrown upon the actual activities of living men. He is trying to organize attempts to achieve perfectly adequate social self-consciousness. If he actually proceeds with this end in view, a sociological scholar may choose between several sorts of alternative. He may devote himself exclusively to problems of a very special nature—like the relation of various types of liquor legislation to the morale of citizens; or the social influences peculiar to rural settlements; or the positive and negative factors apparent in the process of adjustment between whites and blacks in a given community; or he may devote himself to the quite different task of organizing and formulating various kinds of results from such special researches, or from more general investigation. There is no basis for sociology in addition to the collection and interpretation of the general or the special facts, historical and contemporary, thus referred to, and the organization of those facts, first, into a vast system of evolutionary interpretation, like that of which Spencer has proposed a scheme, and, second, into a vast chart of social correlations, like that of Schaeffle's *Bau und Leben*. For an indefinite time to come sociology as a set of “principles” will exist only in the visions of speculators.

With reference to all these questions of fact about society, and so far as the kinds of explanation are concerned which this paper has discussed, the sociologists are contending for a programme, a perspective, and a method. They ask for correlation and coöperation of sciences, not for liberty to substitute a new science. The purpose of integrating social investigation so that,

taken altogether, it will report the social reality, instead of dissecting lifeless parts abstracted from the reality, may produce many new subdivisions of social science. In this connection, however, the sociologists are merely trying to think out methodically a correlation of labor which the problems for investigation must sooner or later compel scholars to adopt. They are calling upon the scattered forces of social scholarship to multiply their effectiveness by recognizing the economy of appropriate method. The valid methodology of all the independent social sciences, organized from the point of view here outlined, and reinforced by the study of every actual concrete condition that contains any exhibit of permanent social forms and forces, must constitute that method. In conformity with this method each of the older divisions of research into facts about society not only retains its importance but greatly increases its importance. In isolation, sciences, or divisions of knowledge, or groups of investigations and conclusions, are meaningless. Organized so that each complements the rest they become eloquent. The point of view of the sociologists focalizes all possible researches about social facts into a composite picture of the whole reality.

As was said at the beginning, it is not the purpose of this paper to explain the distinctive work of sociologists. We have been dealing with the demands of correct method upon all kinds of scholars who have a part in explaining society. It must not be inferred that the sociologists thus read themselves out of the list of needed students of society, or that they merely give themselves a new name, but are only duplicating the work carried on under other names. On the contrary, they insist upon the need of correlating positive investigation of social facts because the problems which they want to study must remain insoluble enigmas until more positive evidence is gathered and organized. From the sociologists' point of view the hardest problems, and the ones closest to human interests, will remain to be solved after all that has been outlined above is realized.

In sociology, as in all the physical sciences, there are

scholars who think that learning loses caste if it lends itself to any human use. These worthies should be humored as patiently as may be, and not taken too seriously. They do not materially weaken the general truth that present sociology frankly proposes the improvement of society as its final purpose. It would not require much argument to show that this purpose must evidently encounter distinct problems after all questions of fact have been answered. The great service and merit of the sociologists thus far has been in contending for correlation and integration of knowledge, and in pointing out that time will be saved in the end by making sure of our evidence. This is, however, a matter of method. After all available knowledge of society shall have been set in order the real task of the sociologists will begin. In addition to the genetic and the static interpretation of ascertained facts, there is another division of inquiry hinted at above, which had hardly been entered until certain sociologists began to explore it. Of all the facts with which social science has to do the most significant and potential are the facts about the feelings and judgments that actuate living men. Stripped of all conventionality, and reduced to most simple expression, the most practical question for students of society today is: What do living people think good for themselves, and what justification is there in the nature of things for these judgments? The power that estops or enforces all other social influence is the judgment that living men have accepted about what is desirable. Whatever may have been the prevalent form of moral philosophy, effective moral standards have always been the algebraic sum of concrete judgments about the things convenient for the persons judging. Not only this, but the nature of moral mechanics is such that when action is necessary no other test of what is good for men is possible. No effort for human improvement is rational which aims to effect improvement in human action of a sort not recognizable as good by the persons concerned. In so far, then, as we regard human conditions as dependent upon the volitions of the persons within these conditions, we are forced back to the judgments of those persons respecting desirable

conditions, as the standing ground of social influence—the starting point, the foundation, the fulcrum of progress. The necessary working basis of social improvement today is accordingly the body of judgments lodged in the minds of living men about the things that are essentially desirable. If it should be found that men today believe some things desirable which are demonstrably impossible, an obvious task of social education must be to chase from the popular mind all speculations after these impossibilities. If the things judged desirable are demonstrably self-contradictory, then a social and a sociological problem is to discover means of proving this incompatibility. If, however, the things deemed desirable are not opposed to known human uses, and are not prohibited by the facts of human conditions, the desire for them must be regarded as a veracious self-expression. It then becomes a social and a sociological task to interpret the desires so expressed, to find appropriate objects for them, and to correlate those objects into a coherent system of social aims. This, in brief, is the problem of social teleology. No one has yet fully stated the problems to be solved in this division of social inquiry. They are the key to all constructive thinking about human improvement. There can be no very stable theories of social action until there are convincing standards of social aim.

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